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A GROUP of prominent literary biographers today advances the theory that each of us in life has a distinctive motif recurrent throughout the course of years. They speak rather vaguely about life symbolism; the linking up of an individual's existence with some note or character, probably an object or even a color, which makes one's life peculiarly distinctive. In a sense, such was the case with Saint Francis. There, however, the character takes the form of a person—specifically, a maid. Not to understand her permanency and importance to lose all the significance of his story, for she made of it a remarkable love epic. She was Mary.

In the gayly happy days of his youth Francis first fell madly in love with a wondrously fair lady. She was a Virgin descended from ancient kings but with all the glowing ardor of his troubadour soul he wooed her. In the clamor of the colorful market-place and in the still silence of the Italian evenings he sang his throbbing lyrics to her. Finally she accepted him, and at one of the strangest nuptials ever known he married her with a new vow. Before the world he named her with a mystic name as Lady Poverty. As his bride she trod the lowly road of penury with him while all the time she wore on her head a crown of stars and had under her feet the sun and moon. With her Francis was deliriously happy. She taught him the truth about the warm earth, the scudding clouds, the murmuring of brooks, and the sadness of drifting leaves. She showed him in time the splendor of heaven and the awful brilliancy of One with whom she had walked centuries before.

For a time the Virgin and the Saint lived with the thousand little birds and beasts of the air; then their spiritual union brought forth a full progeny of stalwart sons. Tenderly, Mary and Francis watched their children prosper until one day their Mother taught the brown-robed sons a new canticle and Francis sent them out into the brightening dawn with its message trembling on their lips. Bravely and gloriously they carried it through the lonely by-paths and crowded highways of the world.

... At home, gentle Sister Death brought to a tired Assisian release from the bonds of flesh and an ineffably joyous reunion with his Eternal Spouse whom he had wed with an undying love years before.